

In the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in this application.

1 (cancelled).

2 (currently amended). ~~The method, according to claim 1, wherein said method is used to screen~~ A method of screening for a sample that activates the intestinal tract immune system, wherein the method comprises comprising the steps of:

(a) ~~assessing whether a plurality of test samples activate the intestinal tract immune system by the assessment method of claim 1; and~~ contacting a test sample with an isolated cell expressing a TLR9 encoded by a DNA comprising the nucleotide sequence shown in SEQ ID NO: 1;

(b) measuring activity of the TLR9 using signal transduction in the cell as an indicator; and

(b)(c) selecting from the plurality of test samples those assessed to activate the intestinal tract immune system the test sample as a sample that activates the intestinal tract immune system if the activity of the TLR9 is increased as compared to activity of the TLR9 in a cell not contacted with the test sample.

3 (currently amended). A method for producing a pharmaceutical composition that activates the intestinal tract immune system, comprising the steps of claim 2, and a further step of mixing the sample ~~assessed to activate~~ selected as a sample that activates the intestinal tract immune system with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

4 (cancelled).

5 (currently amended). ~~The method, according to claim 4, wherein said method is used to screen~~ A method of screening for microorganisms that activate the intestinal tract immune system, comprising the steps of:

(a) ~~assessing whether a plurality of test microorganisms activate the intestinal tract immune system by the assessment method of claim 4; and~~ preparing an extract from a test microorganism;

(b) contacting the extract with an isolated cell expressing a toll-like receptor 9 (TLR9) encoded by a DNA comprising the nucleotide sequence shown in SEQ ID NO: 1;

(c) measuring activity of the TLR9 using signal transduction in the cell as an indicator; and

(d) selecting the test microorganism as a microorganism that activates the intestinal tract immune system if the activity of the TLR9 is increased as compared to activity of the TLR9 in a cell not contacted with the extract

~~—(b) selecting from the plurality of test microorganisms one or more microorganisms that are assessed to activate the intestinal tract immune system.~~

6 (currently amended). A method for producing a food composition that activates the intestinal tract immune system, comprising the steps of claim 5, and then mixing one or more microorganisms selected in part ~~[(b)]~~(d) of claim 5 with a dietarily acceptable carrier.

7 (previously presented). The method of claim 6, wherein the one or more microorganisms are lactic acid bacteria.

8-11 (canceled).

12 (currently amended). The method of claim ~~[[1]]~~2, wherein the intestinal tract tissue is intestinal lymphoid tissue.

13 (original). The method of claim 12, wherein the intestinal lymphoid tissue is Peyer's patch or intestinal lymph node.

14 (currently amended). The method of claim ~~[[1]]~~2, wherein the Toll-like receptor is derived from swine.

15 (currently amended). The method of claim ~~[[1]]~~2, wherein the Toll-like receptor is Toll-like receptor 9.

16-21 (cancelled).

22 (previously presented). The method, according to claim 6, wherein the dietarily acceptable carrier is a dairy product.

23 (cancelled).